

John F. Kennedy Library 2002–2003 Grand Jury Report

I. Reason for Investigation

The Grand Jury has the responsibility to examine all areas of county and city government to ensure that the best interest of the citizens is being served. This year the Grand Jury visited the John F. Kennedy Library in Vallejo.

II. Procedure

The Grand Jury:

- Toured the John F. Kennedy Library in Vallejo
- Interviewed administrator, librarians and volunteers
- Evaluated the general condition of the library and facilities
- Observed the computer labs, literacy department, the Joseph Room and McCune Room.

III. Background

1. The John F. Kennedy Library is a member of the Solano-Napa and Partners Library Consortium (SNAP), which serves the residents of Napa and Solano Counties. This consortium provides library patrons access to information and publications through fourteen libraries.

2. The John F. Kennedy Library, located in the City of Vallejo, was opened on September 10, 1970. The original intent was to use the whole building as a library; however, the City of Vallejo (which owns the building) decided to sublease space to other entities. Those currently leasing space are Fighting Back Partnership, the Vallejo Police Department and Solano Community College.

3. The building is over thirty years old and the construction does not meet modern standards.

- The only restrooms to serve the three levels of the library are located in the basement.
- The elevator is old, slow and inefficient.
- The library's carpets are spotted, torn and need to be replaced.

4. The library has a paid staff of thirty with many volunteers. The library offers a large variety of programs for the public that includes arts and crafts, story time, computer labs, reach out and read, literacy programs for kids, young adults, adults and families. Afternoon concerts are held in the Joseph Room. The McCune Museum Room stores rare books of history and the McCune Collection. There is also a Lawyer in the Library Program, where attorneys come to the library once weekly to provide free brief legal advice and referral service. The Solano County Library and Solano County Bar Association sponsor this program.

5. Funding to operate the library comes from a variety of resources:

- Measure B passed in 1988 provides 1/8 of a cent from sales tax to the library thru 2004
- Property Taxes
- State funded Public Library Fund
- City of Vallejo Redevelopment Agency funds

- Friends of the Library – an organization of volunteers that have fund raisers and donate part of their funds to the library.

IV. Findings and Recommendations

Each finding is referenced to the background paragraph numbers

Finding #1 – The building is run down and old. The original carpet which is 33 years old, is worn, torn and creates a safety hazard. (3)

Recommendation #1 – The City of Vallejo allocate funds to upgrade the building, including replacing the carpet.

Finding #2 – Space allocated for library services is inadequate. (2)

Recommendation #2 – The City of Vallejo make more space available for library use.

Affected Agencies

- John F. Kennedy Library
 - City of Vallejo
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